AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended)

A tube assembly for specimen analysis, comprising:

a tube having a lower pipette portion ~~extending from a lower end portion thereof, said pipette portion having~~ with a passage ~~therethrough~~ for a plug therein, and

a separator having an upper portion sealingly engaged in a lower portion of the tube, said separator having a lower portion ~~of reduced cross section~~ defining a passage and an end edge, whereby upon the filling of the tube to a predetermined level and the centrifuging thereof, centrifuged liquid ~~passes~~ and particles pass through said separator passage to provide a specimen of accurately predetermined volume defined below the separator ~~and above a lower end of said reduced lower separator portion~~ end edge and an air pocket about the separator and above said tube lower pipette portion.

2. (currently amended)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein:

said separator has a generally funnel configuration, and an air pocket is defined between the tube, the separator ~~upper~~ lower portion and an end of ~~the~~ a reduced lower separator pipette portion.

3. (currently amended)

A tube assembly according to Claim 2, wherein [[a]] an accurately predetermined volume of a specimen to be expressed is defined by said air pocket between a separator lower portion and said tube pipette end portion.

4. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 3, wherein the predetermined volume of specimen comprises 0.1 ml.

5. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said separator is sealingly engaged by force-fitting thereof in a tapered portion of the tube.

6. (currently amended)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein:

specimen liquid and sediment are automatically mixed during centrifuging by operation of the ~~operator~~ separator and an air pocket created thereby.

7. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said tube is tapered to narrow toward its lower portion and said separator is force-fitted in a lower portion of the tube.

8. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein a bead is disposed about an upper open end of the tube for sealing engagement with a cap to close the tube.

9. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said tube pipette portion passage is tapered inwardly toward its opening.

10. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, and further comprising:

a plug for sealing engagement in said pipette passage,

said plug being disposed in a cup adapted to engage a lower portion of the tube when the plug is inserted in said pipette passage.

11. (currently amended)

A tube assembly according to Claim 10, wherein:

upon removal of said plug from the pipette passage, a limited lowering of pressure within the tube ~~tends to retain~~ retains liquid from dropping through the pipette passage.

12. (currently amended)

A tube assembly for specimen analysis, comprising:

a tube having a pipette portion extending from a lower end portion thereof, said pipette portion having a passage therethrough,

a plug for sealing engagement in said pipette passage,

a cap for sealingly closing an upper open end portion of the tube, and

a separator having an upper portion sealingly engaged in the tube, said separator having a reduced lower portion defining a passage with an end edge, whereby upon the filling of the tube to a predetermined level and the centrifuging thereof, centrifuged liquid ~~passes~~ and particles pass through said separator passage to ~~provide~~ define a specimen of accurately predetermined volume defined ~~between the~~ below said separator ~~lower portion and the tube pipette portion for expressing of the specimen upon removal of said plug~~ end edge and an air pocket about the separator and above said tube lower pipette portion.

13. (currently amended)

A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein:

said separator has a generally funnel configuration, and [[an]] <u>said</u> air pocket is defined between the tube, the separator upper portion and an end of the reduced lower separator portion.

14. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein said predetermined volume of specimen comprises 0.1 ml.

15. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 13, wherein:

specimen liquid and sediment are automatically mixed during centrifuging by operation of the separator and an air pocket created thereby.

16. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein said tube is tapered to narrow toward its lower portion and said separator is force-fitted in a lower portion of the tube.

17. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein a bead is disposed about an upper open end of the tube for sealing engagement with said cap.

18. (currently amended)

A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein said plug is disposed in a ~~-cup-~~ cap adapted to engage a lower portion of the tube when the plug is inserted in said pipette passage.

19. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 18, wherein:

upon removal of said plug from the pipette passage, a limited lowering ofpressure within the tube tends to retain liquid from dropping through the pipette passage.

20. (currently amended)

A tube assembly for specimen analysis, comprising:

a tube having a pipette portion extending from a lower end portion thereof, said pipette portion having a passage therethrough,

a separator having an upper portion sealingly engaged in a lower portion of the tube, said separator having a lower portion of reduced cross-section defining a passage, whereby upon the filling of the tube to a predetermined level and the centrifuging thereof, centrifuged liquid passes through said separator passage to provide a specimen of predetermined volume defined below ~~the~~ a separator end edge and above ~~a lower end of~~ said ~~reduced lower separator~~ tube pipette portion,

a plug adapted to seat about said pipette passage to seal the passage,

a spring disposed between the plug and the separator to urge the plug to close the pipette passage, and

a pin on said plug and extending through and outwardly from the pipette passage,

whereby a specimen is dispensed by urging said pin against a specimen holder to displace the plug against the urging of the spring.

21. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 20, wherein said spring is an helical tapered spring.

22. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 20, wherein said plug is of at least partially spherical configuration.

23. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 20, wherein said pin extends to an upper end of the pipette passage to facilitate passage of specimen through the passage.

24. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein:

said separator has a lower portion of reduced diameter defining a passage therethrough, and

said separator is of generally hemispherical configuration to adapt the separator to receive a generally hemispherical probe of an apparatus for the drawing of specimen via a passage through the probe for automatic processing.

25. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 24, wherein:

an upper edge portion of said generally hemispherical separator is tapered to a reduced thin edge portion to engage an inner wall of the tube to prevent specimen sediment from entering between the separator and the tube wall.